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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME
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RUEHVT/AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC
RULSJGA/COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC
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SUBJECT: EU RESPONSE REGARDING 46 AFRICAN MIGRANTS RESCUED
AT SEA BY USN

REF: STATE 116313

1. (SBU) Sandra Platt, Acting Head of Unit for Immigration and Asylum at the European Commission's Directorate General for Justice, Freedom, and Security (DG-JLS), told PRM officer that she would issue a Reseau d'Alerte, or network alert, to appropriate people within the European Commission, including FRONTEX, explaining the situation aboard the USS Donald Cook.

If an EU member state such as Malta or Italy decides to accept the migrants, it may ask the European Commission for financial assistance, she said. She had not been aware of the incident and said the Commission had not received any inquiries from EU member states as of late morning August 20.

Platt expressed doubt that Malta would allow the migrants to disembark on its territory.

2. (SBU) Platt said the EU is developing a policy for dealing with such interceptions of migrants at sea, but does not yet have it in place. She added that DG-JLS has been talking with EU member states and reviewing international law of the sea in an effort to adopt a defined common practice in about a year. She discussed the USG request for advice/assistance with Jan de Ceuster, Acting Director for the Directorate for Immigration, Asylum and Borders, and both agreed that issuing a Reseau d'Alerte would be the best way to discretely inform all relevant actors within the Commission of the incident.

It is up to each individual country to decide whether to accept migrants, but the EU stands ready to provide financial support when needed, she said.

MURRAY

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